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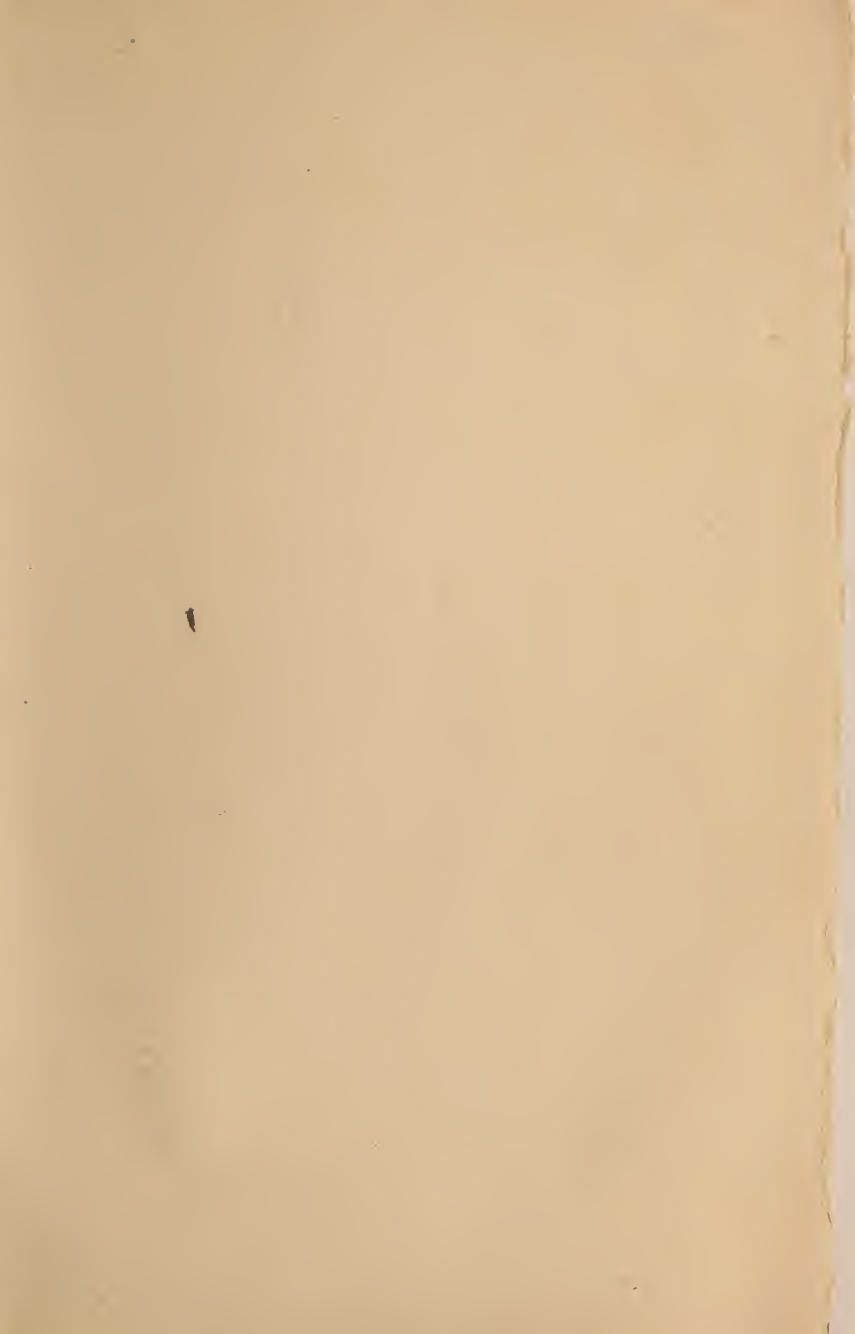
*LITTLE VISITS TO
HISTORICAL POINTS IN
WESTCHESTER COUNTY*

NEW ROCHELLE



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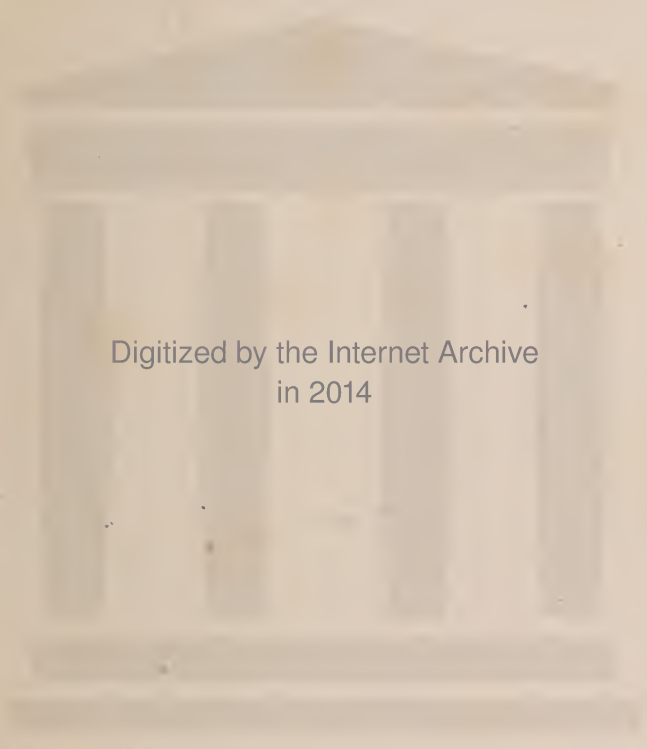


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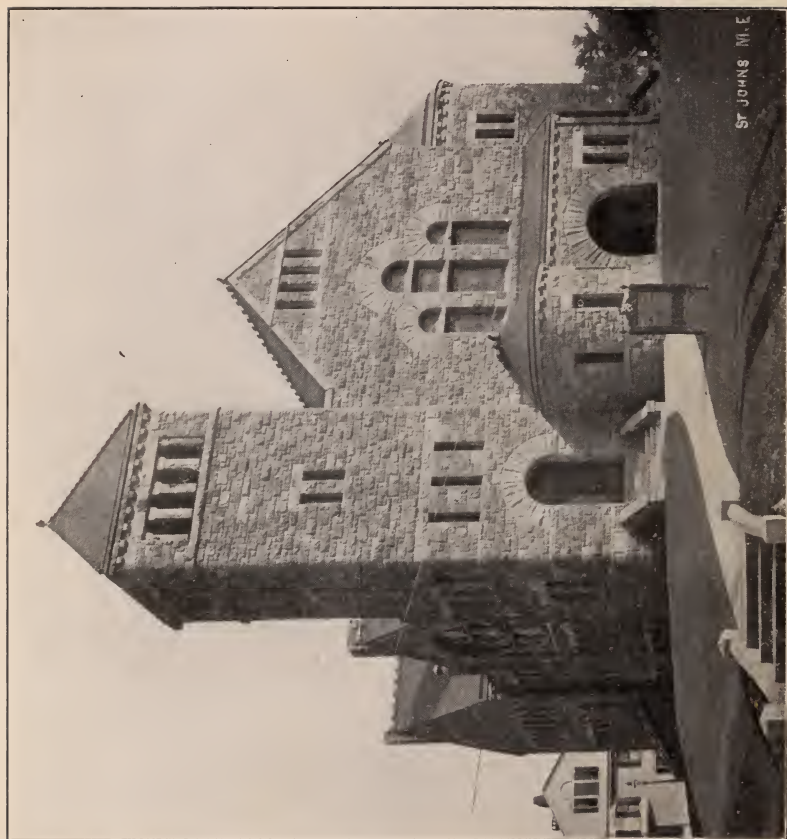
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ST JOHN'S M.E.

Vol. I.

FEBRUARY 1902

No. 2

LITTLE VISITS
TO
HISTORICAL
POINTS IN
WESTCHESTER
COUNTY

PART TWO

BY
AN AUTHORITY

NEW ROCHELLE

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LITTLE VISITS TO HISTORICAL POINTS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

NEW ROCHELLE



THE town of New Rochelle, formerly a part of the Manor of Pelham, was originally included in the grant made by the Indians in the year 1640 to the Dutch West India Company, but no settlement was actually commenced on it until long after Thomas Pell's purchase which occurred in 1654. The aborigines appear to have resided on Davenport's Neck, where they had a large settlement denominated, Shippa; a few settlements were also scattered along the fertile meadows bordering the various fresh water

streams, especially in the northern part of the town.

“On the sixth day of October 1666, Richard Nicolls, governor of the province, did give ratify and confirm unto Thomas Pell, all that tract of land lying to the eastward of Westchester bounds, being a portion of Pelham Manor, which said tract of land hath heretofore been purchased of the Indian proprietors, and ample satisfaction given for the same.”

In 1669 the patentee devised the whole Manor of Pelham to his nephew, John, commonly called Lord Pell, who obtained a further confirmation for the same from Thomas Dongan, governor of the province, on the 28th of October 1687. “On the 20th of September 1689 we find John Pell, Lord of the Manor of Pelham, and Rachel, his wife, conveying to Jacob Leisler of the City of New York, merchant, in consideration of the sum of Sixteen Hundred and Seventy-five Pounds Sterling, current money of the prov-

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ince, all that tract of land lying and being within said Manor of Pelham, containing six thousand acres of land, and also one hundred acres of land more, which the said John Pell and Rachel, his wife, do freely give and grant for the French Church, to be erected by the inhabitants of the said tract of land, or by their assignees, being butted and bounded, as herein is after expressed, beginning at the west side of a certain white oak tree, marked on all four sides, standing at high water mark at the south end of Hog Neck, by shoals, harbor, and runs; northwesterly through the great fresh meadow lying between the road and the Sound, and from the north side of the said meadow, to run from thence due north to Bronx River, which is the west division line between the said John Pell's land, and the aforesaid tract bound on the southeasterly by the Sound and salt water, and to run northeasterly to a certain piece of salt meadow lying in the salt creek which runneth up to Cedar Tree Brook

or Gravelly Brook, and is the bounds to southern."

Several of the leaders of the Huguenots entered into correspondence with Leisler, with a view to the purchase, by him, as agent, of eligible land for the establishment of a Huguenot Colony. The Edict of Nantes, a decree granting a measure of liberty to the Protestants of France, promulgated in 1598 by Henry IV., was revoked by Louis XIV., on the 22nd of October 1685, and by that act of state policy, the conditions of life in the Kingdom of France were made intolerable to most persons of Protestant belief.

For a long time previous to the revocation an increasing number of French Protestants had begun to seek homes in foreign lands. America was especially attractive to them, and after the revocation (1685), the emigration grew to large proportions.

The French Protestants already in America were constantly looking about them for a suit-

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able place to plant a colony, and in 1686 and 1687, secured from John Pell, portions of land in that part of Pelham now embraced in the City of New Rochelle, and as the location met the approval of the Huguenots, Leisler as the constituted agent of the French Protestants was led to locate the settlement in that place; he was authorized by the Committee of Public Safety on the 16th of August 1689, "to use the power and authority of commander-in-chief, until orders should come from their Majesties King William and Queen Mary. And further to do all such acts as are requisite for the good of the province, taking counsel with the militia and civil authority as occasion shall require."

For assuming the government, Leisler was afterwards tried on a charge of high treason, and executed, May 16th 1691. Everything proves Leisler was condemned unlawfully and executed unjustly. A petition in favor of reversing Leisler's attainder was signed by the Huguenots

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of New Rochelle. "Jacob Leisler was truly an honest man, but was a martyr to the cause of liberty, and sacrificed by injustice, aristocracy, and party malignity." Throughout the year preceding his execution, we find Leisler releasing to the exiled Huguenots, the lands which he had purchased in their behalf of John Pell in 1689.

The Huguenots or French Protestants of New Rochelle came directly from England, and were a part of the 50,000 persecuted who had fled into that country before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; this is confirmed by the Charter of Trinity Church, New Rochelle, wherein they specify that "they fled from France in 1681."

La Rochelle in France was the stronghold of the Protestants and the English favored them at every opportunity. "Assure the Rochellese that I will not abandon them," was the message of King Charles of England in 1627, and the same interest and sympathy was extended by

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King Charles II., who on the 28th of July 1681, granted letters of denization in council, under the Great Seal, and assured the exiles that, at the next meeting of Parliament, he would introduce a bill by which they should be naturalized; relieved them at the moment from importation duties and passport fees, and encouraged voluntary contributions for their support.

This order was issued the same year in which the Huguenots of New Rochelle fled from France, conclusive evidence that they constituted a portion of those exiles who accepted the royal offers, and afterwards under the patronage of the government, purchased and settled here in 1689. The Huguënots must have been aided in their escape from France by the English vessels that lay for some time off the Island of Rhe, opposite La Rochelle, in which they were conveyed to England.

Tradition says that they were afterwards transported to America in one of the King's

ships. The point on Davenport's Neck, Bauffet's or Bounefoy's Point, was the spot where they first landed.

On the 17th of April 1695, we find letters of denization granted to Francis LeCount, under oaths appointed to be taken.

On the 6th of April 1595-6 letters of denization were issued under the Seal of the province, to twenty-eight persons of foreign birth; being fugitives by the persecution.

They continued to arrive from England, as far as can be ascertained, till the year 1700.

The settlement of New Rochelle was commenced by the Huguenots in 1691, two years after the purchase of the town. The records of New Rochelle commenced on November 1st 1699 in the French language. The first independent election for town officers took place in 1783. The early settlers gave the place the name it now bears, in remembrance of their native residence, La Rochelle, in France, and soon became noted on account of

the hospitality and politeness of the people, and also for the facilities for acquiring the French language. Many people who afterward became distinguished, received under the charge of the French clergy, the elements of their education; mention may especially be made of Washington Irving, the author of numerous interesting books; John Jay, "who made the celebrated Treaty of Paris, for the independence of our Country, and exerted a powerful influence in extending the limits of the United States to the Mississippi," he was also the first Chief Justice of the United States.

Philip Schuyler entered the army during the French and Indian War; after the Revolution he became a member of the Colonial Assembly of New York, and resisted earnestly the British attempts to tax the Colonies without their consent; he was a delegate to the Continental Congress, by whom he was assigned to the command of the troops in New York, and of the expedition against

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Canada; he afterwards actively superintended Indian affairs. Before the National Constitution was formed he became a member of Congress; and afterwards twice represented his State in the United States Senate. His name is perpetuated in this county, by naming the Fort at Throgg's Neck in honor of him.

For two generations the Huguenots of New Rochelle preserved in its purity the French language.

In the grant to Jacob Leisler, John Pell, Lord of the Manor, and Rachel, his wife, "did give and grant to the said Jacob Leisler, the further quantity of one hundred acres of land for the use of the French Church erected, or to be erected, by the inhabitants of the said tract of land." This property was long in dispute between the Episcopalian and Presbyterian Corporations, each claiming to be the original French Church.

On July 22d 1700 in the general assembly

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of the inhabitants of this place, according to Justice Mott's warrant, "it has been agreed by the plurality of votes, that above the hundred acres of land given by Sir John Pell for the Church of this place, the said hundred acres shall be taken on the undivided lands according to the choice of the elders of the church, as they will find the more profitable for the church and people."

In 1763 the members of Trinity Church obtained a further confirmation of the grant from the heirs of John Pell, and subsequently released to each other.

On the 4th of February 1763, David Guion released the same to Trinity Church for the sum of One Hundred Pounds.

Isaac Guion, Peter Flandreau, Samuel Gelliot and Magdaline Stouppe also released to the Church in 1767.

Prior to the erection of the first Huguenot Church in New Rochelle the pious inhabitants

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of this town walked regularly every Saturday, starting about midnight, to New York a distance at that time of twenty-three miles, to attend the Sunday service at the old Church du St. Esprit in Pine street, New York City, and returned on Sunday evenings to their homes to be ready for their regular duties on Monday morning; always commencing their march by singing their beautiful hymns. Many continued to worship in this manner until the American Revolution broke out, when this part of the country became harassed and over-run by the British troops; the people in consequence were scattered, and the younger members of the community grew up without going to any regular place of worship.*

The Rochellese were the first to bring the Marigold to America; this was their national

*For further particulars on this subject see Rikeman's Evolution of Stuyvesant Village (New York City)

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emblem, and on all occasions displayed with pride.

John Pintard in his "Recollections", refers to the Huguenots of New Rochelle as receiving the Holy Sacrament four times a year—Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday and the middle of September; during the intermission that occurred the communicants walked to New York for that purpose. Previous to their departure they always collected the young children, and left them in the care of the friends who remained at home.

The Huguenots were very solicitous in the domestic education of their children. In the common sitting room of most houses, the mantle-piece was finished with Dutch tiles, containing chiefly the history of the New Testament, and the Parables; they used these object lessons with excellent effect, in connection with verbal training.

The first minister of the French Reformed Church in New Rochelle appears to have been

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the Rev. Daniel Bondet, although there are some reasons for supposing that the Rev. Thauvet Ecotonneau occupied that position.

The year of the Rev. Daniel Bondet's settlement at New Rochelle was 1700. At first he used the French Prayers according to the Protestants Churches of France, but in 1709, his congregation unanimously, with the exception of two individuals, followed the example of their French Reformed brethren in England and New York, by conforming to the English Church. Upon this conformity we find the venerable Propagation Society making an allowance to the Rev. Daniel Bondet, and directing him to use Liturgy of the Church of England.

Governor Ingoldsby issued the following order or license empowering the inhabitants to erect a new Church.

“By ye Honorable Richard Ingoldsby, Esq. her majesties Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-chief of ye province of New York and

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New Jersey, To ye Rev. Mr. Daniel Bondet minister, Chaplain Oliver Beesley, Mr. Isaac Vallian, Dr. John Neuille, Joseph le Villian, and ye other inhabitants of ye town of New Rochelle, in ye county of Westchester, communicants of ye Church of England, as by law established, greeting: Whereas, I am informed of your pious design to build a Church for the worship and service of God, according to ye form and manner prescribed by the Liturgy of the Church of England, and have been applied to for lycense to erect it on ye public street. I have thought fit, and do hereby give leave and lycense to you to erect such building in such convenient place of ye street, as ye shall think most proper, provided ye breadth of such Church do not exceed thirty foot. And further I do authorize and empower you to receive and collect such sums of money and other help, as charitable people shall be disposed to contribute to the good work.

Given under my hand and seal at New York,

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this 20th. day of March, 1709, and of her majesties reign ye ninth year.”

“Richard Ingoldsby”

Church erected in 1710-11 was constructed of stone, and formed nearly a square, being perfectly plain, within and without. The foundation stone was laid by Governor Hunter; and the people were so enthusiastic that even the women carried stones in their hands, and mortar in their aprons, to complete the work.

On February 7th 1714 Queen Annie of England was pleased to grant and confirm the new Church, and the ground whereon it stood.

During the incumbency of the Rev. Michael Houdin, Trinity Church, New Rochelle, received her first charter from King George III.

Queen Annie in 1706, presented to Trinity Church a large chalice and paten; this beautiful service, was many years since deposited in the vaults of Tiffany, Mahattan. The Queen also presented a Church Bible, Book of Homilies, and

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cloth for the pulpit and communion table. About the same time, two small chalices were presented by a member of the Davenport family.

On the 28th of February 1808, the Presbyterian Church was incorporated under the title of the "French Church of New Rochelle," proving conclusively that many of the Huguenots did not enter the Episcopal fold; this congregation was at first attached to the Bedford presbytry. There is a tradition that one of the old Huguenots would daily repair to Bounefoy's or Bauffet's Point, the place where the Huguenots first landed, and turning his eyes in the direction in which he supposed France was situated, would sing one of Marot's hymns, and send to heaven his morning devotions. Frequently his friends joined him in these pious remembrances of their God, and their beloved country, from which they had been so cruelly driven.

The Huguenots opened the road from New Rochelle to White Plains, this road seperated

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their farms into two sections, distinguished as the eastern and western division.

The land was originally laid out in parallel, narrow strips, containing each from fifty to sixty acres. Some of the early settlers purchased double lots, and a very few from eight to ten, containing four or five hundred acres in all.

The lower part of the town, designated as the southern division, was laid out in a similar manner, the lots extending from the south side of the Boston Turnpike to the Sound. Among those in the west division, were the Drakes, Badeaus and the Secors. In the east division the Le Counts, Soulices, Scurmans and Bonnetts. And in the southern division the Guions, Rhinelanders and Flandreaus.

The refugees escaped from France, with only a few articles concealed about their persons; the woman hiding their small bibles in their high dressed hair. Their farms were not paid for until after many years of toil, rigid economy and

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firm reliance in the All Powerful One.

“What sought they thus afar,

Bright jewels of the mine ?

The wealth of war, the spoil of seas ?

They sought a faiths pure shrine.”

This ceaseless toil and endeavor, developed still further their already well-rounded characters, and placed them among the noblest of our national pioneers.

A descendant of one of “these men of sterling worth” has recorded his name on Boston’s great Hall. Peter Faneuil a native of the “Town of New Rochelle,” went to Boston in the year 1720, at the age of eighteen; his uncle Andrew Faneuil, was a wealthy merchant of that place, and Peter obtained employment with him, and inherited his fortune. In 1740 the people of Boston were divided in opinion upon the question of the erection of a new Central Market Hall, and much bitter feeling was aroused. Thereupon, Peter Faneuil, actuated by public spirit, erected Faneuil

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Hall, and presented it to the City.

During the Revolutionary War New Rochelle appears to have endured her share of suffering from the incursion of the enemy, and their emissaries. On the 18th of October, Lord Howe, the British commander, took post in the village, General Washington occupying the intermediate heights between the two rivers the enemy was joined by the second division of Germans, under the command of General Knyphausen, and by an incomplete regiment of cavalry from Ireland, some of which had been captured on their passage.

The Scotch Highland battalion occupied the heights of New Rochelle. From this place both armies moved toward White Plains, on the 25th of October, 1776. On the 29th of January 1777, General Wooster's division was ordered to New Rochelle.

At the east end of the village a severe skirmish took place between a body of American

light horse, under Colonel Moyland, and the Queen's Rangers, commanded by Lieut Colonel Simcoe. In this affair, Colonel Moyland greatly distinguished himself, by beating off the enemy, and making good his retreat to Greenwich. During the War, the entire coast suffered severely both from the enemy's shipping and the incursions of the whale boat-men.

Shortly after our Country's struggle for Independence the State Government conveyed to the notorious Thomas Paine, a large tract of land in the eastern division of New Rochelle, for services he had rendered during the War. Paine came to this Country under the auspices of Franklin, Rush and other prominent people. In 1774 he composed his first song, followed soon after by "Common Sense," "Crisis," "The Age of Reason," etc. Paine was a companion of Robespierre, and was on the trial of the Innocent Louis. He several times escaped a miserable death, and spent a large part of his time in the New Rochelle

house, but at one period lived in a house that stood not far from Prince and Marion Streets, N. Y., he was invariably seen sitting before an old table, on which stood a jug of spirituous liquors.

Paine died on the 8th of June 1809, aged 72 years and 5 months. His body was brought up from New York, and interred on his farm; his bones were afterward disinterred by William Cobbett, and taken to England for exhibition. Some authorities assert that the remains were re-interred in the original ground, and others with equal certainty, claim that after the death of Cobbett, a box of human bones were found among his goods and chattels. In the early forties, Paine's friends purchased the site of his supposed grave, and erected a handsome monument to his memory, to which for a long period they made an annual pilgrimage.

Many of the towns in Westchester County owe their very existence to the railroads, but not so with New Rochelle, nearly two hundred years

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before railroads were even thought of, the town was occupied by a prosperous community.

The Churches in the town are commodious and every way attractive; the Episcopalians were, after the Huguenots, the first to erect buildings, followed by the Presbyterians in 1754, the Methodists in 1791, the Baptists in 1849, the Roman Catholics in 1850 and later by the Lutheran and Colored Congregations.

Among New Rochelle's literati may be mentioned, Rev. Dr. C. W. Bolton, Rev. Mr. Cane-dy, William Leggett, an able journalist, who died at the early age of 37, Frederick Remington, artist and author, etc.

The islands off the coast are picturesque and useful; David's Island has been used by the Government for military purposes since 1861.

Starin's Glen Island is a popular resort and is connected with the mainland by trolley and steamboat.

The Young Men's Christian Association has

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located in the Royal Arcanum Building, "is differentiated form merely recreative, educational, or ethical movements, by its pervading spiritual intent, and its aggressive religious activity." Its work at Fort Slocum, David's Island, among the soldiers has received unsolicited testimonials from both officers and men.

The New Rochelle Exchange for Women's Work, was founded in 1891, for the purpose of aiding reduced gentle women who shrink from ordinary charity, but are thankful for opportunity to help themselves. The Rooms are at 295 Main Street.

The New Rochelle Public Library, founded April, 1893. Chartered July 5, 1894, is nicely located in the Masonic Temple, Main Street. The Library is under superior management, and is exerting a powerful educational influence.

A beautiful monument erected in 1895 by the Patriotic Citizens of the City in memory of those who fought in the War of Secession for

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“One Flag and One Country” is most advantageously placed at the divergence of the two roads near the Presbyterian Church.

New Rochelle was incorporated as a City by act of the legislature of 1899, which received the Governor's signature on the 24th day of March. The first City election was held April 18, 1899. The city government was organized the 25th day of April 1899.

All the fraternal societies are represented. The schools are numerous and well conducted by competent teachers, and the old town promises to attain the distinction of its prototype:—

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